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12 March 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR: CHIEF, PSYCHOLOGICAL STAFF DIVISION

SUBJECT: Suggested Counter-measures in the Case of  
Chinese Communist Charges of U.S.  
Bacteriological Warfare in Northeast  
China.

1. During the past few days Chinese Communist propaganda broadcasts have charged that American military planes have made extensive mass flights over Northeast China, dropping disease-carrying insects and materials and strafing civilian populations:

March 5 - Peking MCHA in English Morse to Europe and No. America.  
March 6 - From Peking in English Morse to  
Europe and North America.

From Pyongyang in Korea to Korea.

March 7 - From Hong Kong in English Morse to agency  
offices of Pan-Asia.

Peking MCHA in English Morse to Europe  
and North America.

Hong Kong Pan-Asia in English Morse to  
agency offices.

Peking Chinese Home Service dictation  
in Mandarin.

March 8 - Peking MCHA in English Morse to Europe and  
North America.

Peking Chinese Home Service in Mandarin.

Peking Chinese International Service in  
English.

2. The Soviets picked these charges up and repeated them  
as follows.

March 8 - Moscow TASS in Russian Hallschreiber to  
Europe.

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March 9 - Berlin Deutschlandsender to Germany.

3. It appears that the Chinese propagandists have made a major error in documenting their charges: they state that American aircraft dropped various disease-laden insects (flies, mosquitoes, fleas, crickets, midges, etc.) over North-east China and Northern Korea during the latter part of February and the early part of March - during weather so cold that it would paralyze such insects within a few moments of their release. In addition, the broadcast to Germany from Berlin mentions "fleas and flies infected with the Bubonic plague" - which makes the basic blunder of ignoring the fact that the Bubonic plague can be transmitted only by fleas. The Communists charge also that the American planes dropped "infected rats" and "infected tree leaves", and fired artillery shells carrying "germ-laden cotton" and "germ-laden feathers".

4. As pointed out in the current Covert Psychological Warfare Manual (page 4, para. 3, last line), "... In the long run the Nazis effectively discredited their entire propaganda machinery" - due to wild overstatements carrying inaccuracies as obvious as those listed above. In view of this situation, it appears that we have a major opportunity for discrediting not only the Chinese Communist broadcasts but also those of the Soviets and the East German Communists.

5. The key to this opportunity is in the basic mistake made in the subject atrocity campaign: the enemy has made his charges in overt media. By taking aggressive counter-measures immediately in overt media all over the world, we should be able to discredit the Soviet propaganda as effectively as the Nazis ultimately discredited their own.

6. PY/PW is now checking the average temperatures, and is obtaining statistics from Government entomologists regarding the temperatures at which the alleged disease-infected insects are paralyzed by the cold. (Every farmer knows that there are no mosquitoes, crickets, flies, midges, etc., around in cold weather.)

7. Obviously, the effectiveness of such a counter-propaganda campaign in overt media will depend in great measure upon how soon it is launched following the release of these charges. In view of this, it is requested that CYP request DD/P to give a policy decision on this approach as early as possible.

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Acting Chief, Psychological Warfare Branch  
Psychological Staff Division

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**SUGGESTED GENERAL OUTLINE FOR GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN  
REGARDING CHINESE COMMUNIST CHARGES OF U.S. BACTERIOLOGICAL  
WARFARE.**

"I have called this press conference because it is becoming obvious that the Chinese Communists, backed by the Soviets, are trying to convince the entire world that the United States has used bacteriological warfare in Korea.

"Evidence that this campaign of vilification is based on a diabolically premeditated plan is accentuated by a warning recently issued by the Chinese Communist Foreign Minister Chou En-Lai to the effect that U.S. Air Force personnel guilty of using bacterial warfare will be 'dealt with as war criminals on capture.'

"The free world is well acquainted with the uncivilized Communist judicial practices of 'drummed-up charges and predetermined guilt,' and we only have to recall the cases of Cardinal Mindszenty, Robert Vogeler, William Oatis and others, to envisage what Chou En-Lai is planning. It is obvious that a government which forces hundreds of thousands of its own people to shed blood, suffer and die for the cause of its Soviet masters in the Kremlin, will not hesitate in spilling the innocent blood of some hapless captive in order to cover up its own ineptitude to deal with a health situation which stems from the Chinese Communist government's preoccupation

"In an attempt to 'document' their charges, the Chinese and the Soviets have made some preposterous claims. Here, for example, is a broadcast from Peking WNA in English waves to Europe and North America on March 6:

" On March 3, five groups of American aircraft, in a total of 32 flights, spread germ-laden insects in Antung, Langtow, and Chien. On March 4, thirteen groups of American aircraft in a total of 72 flights spread germ-laden insects in Antung, Langtow, Simin, [and several other places with unpronounceable names]. At 11 o'clock that morning 6 American aircraft were observed above Langtow, dropping two cloth receptacles from a height of 5,000 meters which burst open 2,000 meters up; and within a matter of seconds a swarm of flies was found near the highway."

Now, 2,000 meters is approximately 6,500 feet - well over a mile. So, assuming that 'within a matter of seconds' was as

long as 10 seconds, these flies were travelling well over  
four hundred miles an hour!

"Two days later Peking broadcast in English to Europe  
and North America 'details' of other incidents:

"February 25 - Enemy aircraft circled for a long  
time over Kyemidong and Kuyongdong, south of Pyongyang  
and dropped flies, fleas, spiders, and other disease-  
laden insects.

"February 27 - Flies and mosquitoes . . . infected  
leaflets and flies . . . infected insects were also  
found east of Ichon and Chonju . . .

"February 28 - Enemy aircraft dropped infected into  
west of Kujonjo. Infected tree leaves . . . germ-  
laden insects were also discovered in areas north of  
Pyongyang.

"March 1 - Fleas, mosquitoes, flies and other germ-  
laden insects were spotted in the vicinity of Tosen

Sinchon, and Koksan.

"March 2 - Enemy aircraft dropped large swarms of

flies, fleas, midges and other infected insects over

Manchon and Song Non.'

"Just to show you how ridiculous these charges are, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reports that the common house-fly - a notoriously tough insect - is knocked out by temperatures below forty degrees Fahrenheit, which is eight degrees Fahrenheit above the freezing point.

"Perhaps the Communists want us to believe that these were super-insects able to withstand the sub-freezing temperatures of winter nights in Korea, or - as the Manchester Guardian expressed it, on March 8th - that these flies were 'special winter flight clothing - another triumph for U. S. logistics'!

"Then, on March 8, the Soviets picked up the propaganda cudgels. TASS broadcast from Moscow to Europe the following text:

"Pyongyang - During the night of March 7, United States aircraft dropped bombs containing germ-bombs infected

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flies, mosquitoes, and so forth, over three districts of Pyongyang. The bombs were painted green and made of thin material. Inside they were divided into four sections. When hitting the ground the bombs exploded, allowing the insects to fly out.'

"The same day the French Communists climbed aboard the Soviet propaganda bandwagon: The Paris newspaper Le Soir screamed in heavy 8-column headlines over a story by their North Korean correspondent, Wilfred Burchett, who quoted a North Korean eye witness describing -

"A green colloidal cylinder exploding 30 meters above the ground containing tracts and tons of thousands of insects . . . one kind of insect resembling the ordinary fly, but has a red head and swollen belly. Another kind is a grasshopper . . . but Americans have also released lizards and mice.'

Here, again, the enthusiasm of the Communist propagandists

has overruled their reason: now we are expected to believe that lizards - which are dormant in cold weather - have been ~~used~~ used to carry disease germs.

"The following day the East German Communists took up the cry - again making the same ridiculous mistakes. Berlin

Deutschlandsender broadcast to Germany a commentary by

~~Helmut~~ Schneider labeled 'The Truth About the United States'.

This commentary describes 'the dropping over Korea of fleas and flies infected with the bubonic plague'. Evidently the

German Communists, also, did not take the trouble to

consult elementary medical textbooks. If they will do so,

and I am sure that their Soviet masters will make certain

that they do - they will learn that the bubonic plague is

a flea-borne infection, and cannot be spread by flies, as

they charge. Plague, typhus and cholera cannot be carried

by such insects as crickets, spiders, mosquitoes, and

midges - insects which are also knocked out by sub-freezing



temperatures. None of the insects described by the Chinese Communists as disease carriers could survive a single night <sup>North</sup> in Korea or Northeast China under <sup>the sub-freezing</sup> temperatures existing on the dates listed by the Chinese Communists.

"This discovery should give them very red ears - if their heads have not already been chopped off for making such stupid propaganda blunders.

"Obviously, all of this uproar is only a frantic attempt by the Chinese Communists to place the blame on the United States for plague conditions which are endemic in China at all times. Naturally, under the conditions of trench warfare which now prevail in the Korean War Zone, plague spreads like wildfire. You cannot live with rats without getting fleas - and in this case the fleas carry the deadly bubonic plague.

"Even under normal conditions, the Chinese Communists have never been able to control the bubonic plague in

China, due to a shortage of medical personnel. As of August, 1950, according to Vice Minister of Public Health, Ho Cheng, there were only 20,000 'qualified doctors,' less than 2,500 pharmacists and just over 20,000 nurses and midwives in all of China."

"By contrast, the US in 1950 had 209,040 registered physicians, 101,849 pharmacists, and over half a million nurses for a population only one-third as large as China's. Under such primitive conditions, it is no wonder that the plague has gotten out of control in China."

